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"Love" is Not Really a Transitive Verb

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When I was in a creative writing class, the topic was romance. The teacher let us discuss all the aspects of "love." That's when I drifted away into my own world.

People often say, "I love you!" But what would it mean? If you say "I love you" to me, this certainly implies that there are other people whom you don't love. Next, suppose that you say "I love you" to you child, only when your child behaves according to your expectation. This certainly implies that you may not love your child when s/he doesn't behave. So, the use of the word *love* is in general conditional to the context, including relationship, time, location, behavior, etc. In this regard, even God may love only those who believe in Him.

However, the word *love* is also used in a different way. For example, some childcare experts suggest that for the best of children, their parents need to love them regardless of what they do. In certain religious traditions, love or compassion must be offered to everyone (and every living being). This kind of "love" must be unconditional. Then, instead of saying "I love you" or "I love you only when you do such and such," one might say just, "I love." Of course, this "intransitive" use of the word is ungrammatical, at least in English. Is it because the English word *love* is limited to the conditional use or is it because unconditional love is not really possible?

Considering what happens in the world, we can surely suspect that unconditional love is just an imaginary thing. However, we can also think of some examples that suggest this may not be the case. For example, we know that some parents save their children even sacrificing their own lives. Certain past and existing spiritual leaders are said to really love everyone, even when they are hurt or killed. In fact, such spiritual leaders are said to be even ego-less. Then, for them, it is not even "I love," but it might be just "love," comparable to

"impersonal" verbs such as *rain*, as in "it rains." If that's the case, for such a spiritual leader, "love" permeates beyond the confine of everything. In that case, love must exist around that person all over and all the time.

That's when I realized that the class was already over and saw nobody around me.